

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for recovering platinum group elements comprising:

charging into a closed electric furnace and melting, together with flux components and a reducing agent, a platinum group element-containing substance to be processed and a copper source material containing copper oxide;

sinking molten metal of primarily metallic copper below a molten slag layer of primarily oxides; and

enriching the platinum group elements in the molten metal sunk below, which method for recovering platinum group elements is characterized in that;

the copper source material charged into the electric furnace is composed of granules of an average grain diameter of not less than 0.1 mm and not greater than 10 mm;

a copper content of molten slag in the furnace is ascertained by sampling and analyzing; and

molten slag whose copper content has decreased to 3.0 wt% or less is discharged from the electric furnace when a copper content of the molten slag has been ascertained to be 3.0 wt.% or less.

2. canceled

3. (original) A method for recovering platinum group elements according to claim 1, wherein the interior of the electric furnace is maintained at a pressure lower than

atmospheric pressure from the melting of the charge material to the discharging of the molten slag.

4. (currently amended) A dry method for recovering platinum group elements comprising:

charging into a closed electric furnace and melting, together with flux components and a reducing agent, a platinum group element-containing substance to be processed and a copper source material containing copper oxide;

sinking molten metal of primarily metallic copper below a molten slag layer of primarily oxides;

enriching the platinum group elements in the molten metal sunk below;

separating the molten metal enriched in the platinum group elements from the molten slag and transferring it to a separate furnace while still in the molten state;

oxidizing the molten metal in the separate furnace to separate it into a slag layer of primarily oxides and a molten metal layer further enriched in the platinum group elements,

which method for recovering platinum group elements is characterized in that;

the copper source material charged into the electric furnace is composed of granules of an average grain diameter of not less than 0.1 mm and not greater than 10 mm;

a copper content of molten slag in the furnace is ascertained by sampling and analyzing; and

molten slag ~~whose copper content has decreased to 3.0 wt% or less~~ is discharged from the electric furnace when a copper content of the molten slag has been ascertained to be 3.0 wt.% or less; and

the molten slag generated in the separate furnace is water-cooled from a high-temperature state to obtain a copper source material containing the aforesaid copper oxide composed of granules having a grain diameter of not less than 0.1 mm and not greater than 10 mm.

5-7. canceled